

Members Salaries

I suppose the answer really depends on the individual member, but one can ask whether there is a certain degree of hidden income in the member's allowance. Obviously, this is an impossible question to answer. All the data that was submitted to the Beaupré commission and which has been presented to the public press by members would suggest not; in any event, it is surely unconscionable for members of the front bench of the New Democratic Party to so distort parliamentary life as to suggest that all this expense money is hidden income, added to a member's salary over and above the normal salary, which he does not spend on expenses. Yet that is the effect of the kind of arguments they make. For example, on December 19, 1974, as recorded at page 2398 of *Hansard*, the NDP House leader said:

In 1972, members of parliament were in the top 1.5 per cent of all income tax payers. Stated differently, this means that 98.5 per cent of all the working people in Canada who pay taxes and who have living expenses as well, earn less than members of parliament...

It want to stress, for the benefit of all members, that it seems to me we must keep in mind that we are among the very affluent in our country. As I have said, if this bill should pass, that position vis-à-vis the rest of society will be heightened for members of parliament. We will move from being among the top 1.5 per cent to being among the top .5 per cent.

That, Mr. Speaker, is totally false.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacGuigan: The latest figures that I have are for the tax year 1973. If you take this in terms of families—and, of course, this was at a lower income level than we now have, which means the percentage would now be higher—and bear in mind that our annual salary is \$18,000, 12.7 per cent of Canadian families had incomes of more than \$20,000. The figure is not given for \$18,000; obviously, it would be something like 15 per cent. At present-day figures it would probably be more like 20 per cent. Therefore, we are far from being in the top income bracket. We do well to be in the top 15 or 20 per cent. Taking individuals and families combined, the percentage is slightly less; the figure at that point was 9.6 per cent. Again, that percentage applied to \$20,000 incomes. It is hard to compute what the percentage would be for the breaking point of \$18,000, but it would be between 12 and 15 per cent.

Those are more exact statements of the position in which members of parliament find themselves in terms of the income earners of this country: it is not in the top 1.5 per cent or .5 per cent, but in the top 15 or 20 per cent.

A newspaper story that appeared in the December 20 edition of the *Montreal Gazette* written by Mr. Radwanski, makes the point that 7,500 federal civil servants then earned more than \$20,000 a year. Undoubtedly, if you applied the figure of \$18,000 it would be more like 10,000 civil servants who earned more than \$18,000 a year, and these are people whom we employ.

● (1630)

We do not necessarily have to be at the top of the pinnacle in the public service to the extent that we can be assimilated to the public service—but whether or not we are at the very top we can hardly continue to be in the position where some 10,000 of the people we employ and

[Mr. MacGuigan.]

who often are co-operatively working with us should be paid at a higher rate than we are.

An hon. Member: With their 37 hours a week.

Mr. MacGuigan: Yes, with their 37-hour week, as contrasted with the 90-hour to 100-hour week that a member of parliament puts in, including his travelling time. As I have mentioned, a commission was set up to look into this question. The Beaupré commission recommended that members of parliament should receive \$25,000 in the twenty-ninth parliament. This would put us in the \$29,000 bracket now. We have not asked for that amount. Our demands have been more modest because we have been concerned not only that our demands should be just but that they should be seen to be just, so that Canadians would realize that we were not out for the last dollar but for a kind of minimal justice for ourselves and that we are attempting to protect the public interest by removing this conflict of interest.

It seems to me that what we face in this bill is a question of fundamental honesty for members of parliament. It may be that some members would be content with a crock of hypocritical nonsense. But I believe that if most members speak and vote as they really think about this bill, there is no doubt that they will support this very enlightened, very moderate legislation which is not only just to members in a rather minimal sense but is also highly protective of the public interest.

Mr. Max Saltzman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, nothing more demonstrates the nature of this debate than the speech we have just heard. What are the issues here? The hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville (Mr. MacGuigan) was saying to us: My own government has been unable to control inflation in the economy. My own government has been unable to control all kinds of unfairness which has taken place in the economy. Therefore, we have to get on the bandwagon and grab everything we can.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Saltzman: That is exactly what he said. We are considering a statement by a member of a government which has abdicated every kind of leadership in this nation. That, more than the money itself, is what is at issue. What is at issue is that the so-called free market economy is just riddled with all kinds of people grabbing things for themselves, and the hon. member is suggesting to us that we should not be left out of the race. There is no leadership from that side of the House as far as controlling inflation is concerned, and he is therefore saying: Let's go with it.

The hon. member for Windsor-Walkerville should be very careful before lecturing this House and my leader, in particular, on honesty. That was one of the most dishonest speeches I have heard for a long time. It was comparing apples with oranges. It is quite clear, even from the section of *Hansard* from which he read, that my hon. friend for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) was referring to individual incomes. And what did we hear as a comparison? Family incomes, which obviously are much higher and entirely different. If you want to compare family incomes, then compare them. But it was grossly wrong to